

Progress.

DUNEDIN ASSOCIATION.

We take the following interesting report of the proceedings on the occasion of Mr. and Mrs. Bright's departure from Dunedin, from the 'Evening Herald' of the 9th July:—

There was a large gathering at the Lyceum Hall last evening, when a farewell soiree was given in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bright, who intend leaving for Sydney within a day or two. After the good things liberally provided by the ladies had been done justice to, a few selections were given by the band, and Mr. Stout delivered a short address. He said that as those present were aware, they had met to bid farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Bright. He hoped, however, that at no distant time they would welcome them back to Dunedin. He did not think it fitting or proper on this occasion that he should say anything in praise of Mr. or Mrs. Bright; all who had met them privately, and those who had heard them publicly did not require that he should say anything in their praise. He might however say this: that all of them were deeply indebted to them for the assistance rendered by them in Dunedin to the cause of Freethought.—(Applause.) The Freethought movement had mighty odds to contend against, and what they as Freethinkers required to do was to keep true to their position in and out of season. On behalf of the executive of the Association he presented Mrs. Bright with an illuminated address in recognition of her efforts amongst them.—Mrs. Logan, for the Ladies' Association, also made a presentation to Mrs. Bright, who appropriately expressed her thanks. Mr. Bright gave a short address, mainly touching on the position of Freethought in New Zealand and the changes that have come upon it since the time when he first had the honour and satisfaction of addressing an audience of his fellow-men and fellow-women in this beautiful city of the Middle Island of New Zealand. It was now little more than eight years since he delivered his first Freethought oration in a canvas erection on the southern market reserve. He could not help thinking of what a change had come over the position of Freethought in these eight years. Much had been done on its behalf before by many capable speakers, and especially by the gentleman (Mr. Stout) who is still looked upon as the foremost Freethinker of New Zealand, if not of the whole of these colonies. (Applause.) There were others, like Mr. James Smith (from Melbourne), Mr., now Dr. Peebles (of America), who worked for the cause here; but at that period, 1876, spite of all that had been done, and though there had been formed some Associations which had been allowed to lapse, he believed he was correct in stating that there was not a single Freethought Association in existence in this colony. During his recent tour throughout New Zealand he found more or less active energetic associations on behalf of freedom of thought in all the principal cities. At Christchurch, where on all previous visits it was necessary, as it were, for him to pass their closed doors, as Christchurch was so completely given up to the old respectabilities of Orthodoxy to hear a Freethought lecture, he found on his recent visit an active Freethought Association with an excellent hall. There were also Associations at Wellington, Wangamui, Auckland, and other places in the colony.—A musical programme concluded the proceedings.

AUCKLAND RATIONALISTIC ASSOCIATION.

Mr. W. C. Dennes, Hon. Sec. to the above Association, forwards the following interesting report for the past month:—

Sir,—In accordance with my usual custom I send you a brief account of our progress as a Freethought Association. Since the departure of that bright light in our cause (Mr. Chas. Bright) we have appeared somewhat cloudily, yet have managed to disperse the clouds by the efforts of one or two of our most intelligent members who have favored us with very carefully prepared and excellent lectures which I think would compare favorably with some delivered by professional lecturers.

Last Sunday we had a lecture delivered by a very promising young Freethought lecturer, named Isaac Selby, of Dunedin, but recently from Sydney. The subject chosen was "Darwin and Moses, or which is the more rational, the Mosaic account of Creation as given in Genesis, or the Evolution hypothesis as promulgated by Darwin," and young as he is (only about 21 years) the lecturer shewed himself very familiar with and well posted up in the subject.

We are likely to have another rather exciting time of it in the course of a week or two, as the Christian Evidence Society have accepted Mr. Selby's challenge to debate upon a similar subject viz., "Is the Mosaic account of Creation at variance with Science," the net proceeds to be divided between that Society and the A.R.A.—the result of which I hope to be able to communicate to you in my next monthly report.

Numerically we are slowly increasing, having 150 members, and generally 350 to 400 attendants at our Sunday evening meetings.

At our last general meeting it was resolved that we should place all available funds at a fixed deposit, as the nucleus of a building fund, which we hope will rapidly increase.

We have made but little progress with our Sunday School up to the present moment, but anticipate a better time in the near future. As a well-known professional gentleman has offered his services as instructor in calisthenics, &c.

Our Sunday morning discussion class is fairly attended, and is frequently quite as amusing as it is instructive.

Hoping to have something interesting to forward you next month.

Yours faithfully,

W. C. DENNES, Hon. Sec.

Auckland, July 15, 1884.

WELLINGTON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The following report from Mr. Tyrrell, Hon. Sec. to the above Association, shows that they continue to do good work:—

Sir,—In my last communication I gave you an account of the formal opening in our new premises. Since then I am happy to inform you our Association is increasing rapidly in numbers. We have started a choir, with an efficient teacher of music—a Mr. Francis, lately from the Lyceum, Dunedin. This alone, when they get into form, will make our Sunday evenings more attractive. We had a very enjoyable Social Gathering on the 2nd inst., (the first in the "Lyceum") which passed off very pleasantly. Mr. Harris was very kind in giving us another lecture on the 22nd ult. The principal part of his subject was, a condemnation of Mr. C. Bradlaugh's theological views, and other matters. Mr. Harris is a Socialist. His remarks are therefore somewhat excusable, but they are not at all acceptable to the majority of our members, superstition (with them) having died out. On the following Sunday Mr. Gray gave us a very interesting reading:—"Tyndal on the labours of Mayer." There was a good attendance. A course of lectures are being given by our Mr. Robertson, viz.:—"Problems of Life," "Education," "Labour," "Government and Religion." The first was delivered on the 6th inst. to a large audience. These lectures, being important subjects, and ably handled, will no doubt call forth an animated discussion. Last Sunday Mr. Hendrey delivered a lecture—"Taxation and how it originated." This also is a good subject and will bear repetition. We intend having a Social Gathering every month, for the purpose of making our Association attractive, and introducing the members to each other. When the summer comes round we shall have marine and other excursions, on Sundays, adjourning to our Hall in the evening. We thoroughly intend our Association to be an enjoyable one. Thanking you kindly for publishing our reports.

I am, &c.,

W. TYRRELL, Hon. Sec.

Lyceum, Wellington, July 17, 1884.

CANTERBURY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The following is Mr. F. C. Hall's report for the month of July:—

Sir,—Since my last the following have been our Sundays:—June 22nd "What an Atheist would do with Jesus," by Mr. Billeliff. June 29th, "Land and Distribution of Wealth," by Mr. C. Lightband. July 6th, "The Great Delusion," by Mr. G. Parker. July 13th, "A Reply to the Question—What do you give us in its place," by Mr. Chas. Bright.

I sent you a Christchurch newspaper by which you saw that the licensing case against me fell through. Moral—Fight

I am glad to see that so many of the candidates for the House are for keeping the present Education Act intact—as you know the cumulative vote was a sop to one of the religious bodies, but now that Freethinkers, with others, make use of it some of the pious are for altering that clause.

Mons. Max O'Rell, in "John Bull et son ile," takes off the Religious Hypocrites in England in a racy manner. I can recommend its perusal to your readers who may be students in French.

The Lyceum keeps up very well both in the number of scholars and the interest taken in it by members.

I am grieved to inform you that the Salvation zeal is failing here, although Christchurch is called Head Quarters.

Yours faithfully,

F. C. HALL, Secretary C.F.A.

Christchurch, July 19, 1884.

WOODVILLE FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We have received the following from a member of the Woodville Freethought Association:—

Sir,—I am glad to report that the Freethought movement here shows steady progress. Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather